

THE COAT WITHOUT A SEAM

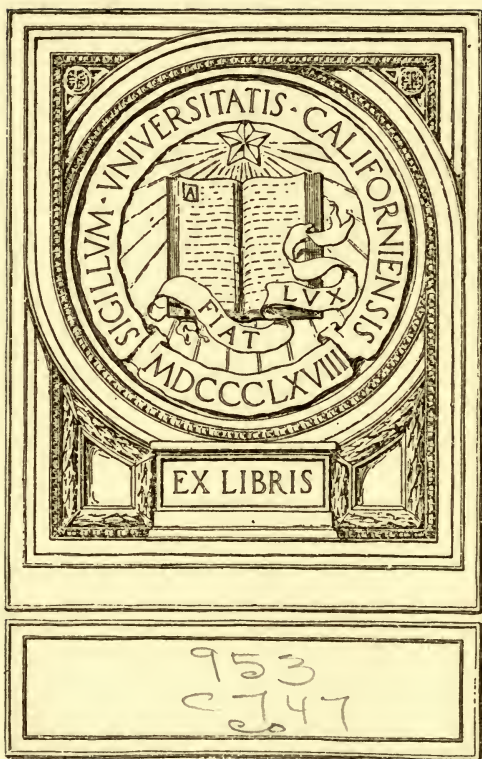
AND OTHER POEMS

Helen Gray Cone

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THE
COAT WITHOUT A SEAM
And Other Poems

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A CHANT OF LOVE FOR ENGLAND
AND OTHER POEMS

A volume of miscellaneous poems containing as its title poem a reply to the German "Hymn of Hate."

"Firmly and finely fashioned, and unaffectedly sincere."

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And Other Poems

BY

HELEN GRAY CONE

AUTHOR OF "A CHANT OF LOVE FOR ENGLAND,
AND OTHER POEMS"



NEW YORK
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THE COAT WITHOUT A
SEAM



THE COAT WITHOUT A SEAM

THERE was a web, ere Time began,
Woven on the loom of God,
Woven for the need of Man.
Through the web two colors ran,
Blue that is the sky of God,
Red that is the blood of Man.
The web was woven, the web was one:
The stars sang when the work was done.

God had willed it to be worn—
Fit garment for the heavenly feast—
By Man, that was to be His son.
Only God could dream that dream!
When Time began, and Man was born,

THE COAT WITHOUT A SEAM

He clothed himself in the skin of the beast,
And under it beat the heart of the beast.
Not till Man be born God's son
Shall he wear the Coat without a Seam!

(Ah, the dream, the wondrous dream
Of a World without a Seam,
Man being one, as God is one,
Brother's brother and Father's son,
All earth, all Heaven, without a seam!)

The Roman strode through field and flood,
Blind as Fate with battle-blood;
Victory glittered in his hand;
And when he laid him down at night
Under the stars of some strange land,
Weary of the march or fight,
He wrapped his heart in the vast dream
Of a World without a Seam;

Yet the dream was not divine;
The fierce heart beat like marching feet:
"The World is one—the World is mine!"
That was the dream of states foregone,
Of Babylon, of Macedon;
Sleeked by whatsoever art,
It is the dream of the beast's heart.
Massive-treading Rome paced on
(As Macedon, as Babylon,)
Into the dusk of states foregone:
She left her mantle still astream
Along the wind, her purple dream—
Not the Coat without a Seam!
The eyes of emperors see it float,
They hail it for the sacred Coat:
Men follow on through field and flood,
Blind as Fate with battle-blood.
See the sworded sceptred train,
Out of the dusk they all advance:

Iron-crownéd Charlemagne,
Barbarossa flaming past,
Sombre majesties of Spain,
Pomps of old monarchic France—
Supreme Napoleon last,
Sweeping his ermine-bordered robe
And gripping fast the globe.
(Nay, who is this that follows him,
A vision helmeted and grim,
A countenance pallid and aghast?)
—Into the dusk they all are gone,
As Babylon, as Macedon.
Not till Man shall dream God's dream
Shall he wear the Coat without a Seam!

(Ah, the dream, the wondrous dream
Of a World without a Seam!
Man being one, as God is one,
Brother's brother and Father's son,
All earth, all Heaven without a seam!)

“What shall we do, we simple folk
Who walk as cattle in the yoke?
Surely the vision of this Coat—
Fit garment for the heavenly feast—
Is for prophet and for priest,
Not for men of little note!
Surely the quest to find this Coat—
Woven of empyrean thread
Heaven-blue and heart-red—
This is for Kings and Chancellors,
Parliaments and Emperors,
Not for men of little note!”
—Nay, this do ye every one:
All your days to dream God’s dream,
That Man, who is to be His son,
Shall wear the Coat without a Seam!

**SONNETS OF THE GREAT
PEACE**

SONNETS OF THE GREAT PEACE

"Incertainties now crown themselves assured
And peace proclaims olives of endless age."

—SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnet CVII.*

I

WHAT boon is this, this fresh and crystal
thing,

Perfect as snow, dropped from the deep
of the sky—

This healing, shed as from the soft swift
wing

Of some great mystical bird low-sweep-
ing by?

This music suddenly thrilling through the
mind

Angelic unimagined ecstasy,

As when warm fingers of the Spring unbind

Young brooks that laugh and leap, at
last being free?

By what white magic, what unfathomed art,

Was this best gift secretly perfected,

This amulet, that laid against the heart

Melts all the icy weight that held it dead?

This is that Peace we had and did not know;

This is that Peace we lost—how long ago!

II

Shall we not now work wonders with this
charm,

To the vext heart of the world benignly
laid,

Fending all future golden lads from harm,
And all gray mothers, and every starry
maid?

Yea, all kind beasts that ask with patient eyes
Our wisdom to forestall bewildering pain:
Yea, all kind fields, trees rippling to the
skies,

Brown earth sweet-breathing under
natural rain.

Shall we not now, being freed, being healed
of Peace,

Retrieve all days to be from blot and
blight,

Give to the chained goodwill of Man release,
And a new deed of manumission write
On a new page, made by this marvellous
boon

Pure as unfooted snow under the moon?

III

How did we cast away our careless days
In that old time before we knew their
worth,
Wandering with chance, even as a child that
strays,
Spilling their unprized splendors on the
earth!
But now we have eaten War as daily bread,
Borne it upon our souls a weary weight,
Made it the pillow to a restless head,
Breathed it as air, sick with the reek of
hate:
And Peace is come a stranger, and grave-
eyed,
Like a young maid turned woman; on our
knees

We do her reverence as a spirit enskyed;
How should we spend such shining days
as these?
They have cost great pain: needs must we
hold them dear,
Counting our jewels with a heavenly fear.

IV

Ghosts of great flags that billowed in the
sun
With glorious colors above the crowded
street,
Lifting our hearts to know the rent world
one,
Teaching the march of Man to hurrying
feet,
Shall ye not haunt those skyward spaces still

With memory of your sun-illuminated
streaming,
Bright brother-angels heralding goodwill,
Beckoners of sordid spirits to noble
dreaming?
Or shall your many beauteous blazonries
Fade out from the dulled sense and be
forgot,
And intimations so august as these
Lapse into silence even as they were not,
Comrades turn rivals, and heart-fast allies
Weavers of schemes, peering with insect
eyes?

V

What shame were this to those who lie
asleep
Under the scarlet poppies, having bought

[A clean new world with blood! Shall we
not keep

Faith with our dead, and give them what
they sought?

Is not a world the measure of our debt

To those whose young lives sadly we
inherit,

Living them out, making them fruitful yet?

What lesser meed fits their transcendent
merit?

The future was their sacrificial gift,

And joy unborn, and beauty uncreate,

And little children that should racing lift

Their torch of life, laughing at death and
fate:

Shall we not make, mindful of all they gave,

A star of this old earth which is their grave?

MOODS OF WAR

THE SWORD

ONE of the seventy had a sword
The day that Christ was crucified:
He followed where they led his Lord,
The man that could not stand aside.

When that first hammer-stroke rang loud,
And left and right the rabble swayed,
He flashed from out the staring crowd,
He died upon the Roman blade.

His fruitless deed, his noteless **name**,
By careless Rome were never told.
Now shall we give him praise or blame?
Account him base, acclaim him, bold?

Was he the traitor to his Lord,
Deeper than Peter that denied,
The loving soul that took the sword,
The man that would not stand aside?

Or did the glorious company
Of Michael's sworded seraphim
With chivalrous high courtesy
Rise up to make a place for him?

ALIGNED

WHY do you leap in the wind so wild,
O Star-Flag, O Sky-Flag?

And why do you ripple as if you smiled,
Flag of my heart's delight?

"I laugh because I am loosed at last,
Free of the cords that bound me fast
Mute as a mummy, furled on the mast,
Far from the beckoning fight!

"I joy because I am aligned—
The Star-Flag, the Sky-Flag—
With these the noblest of my kind,
Flags of the soul's desire!

And where the blended Crosses blaze,
And where the Tricolor lifts and sways
To the marching pulse of the Marseillaise,
I may be tried in the fire!"

Yea, not for gold and not for ease,
My Star-Flag, my Sky-Flag,
The Fathers launched you on the breeze,
Flag of man's best emprise!
Yea, not for power and not for greed,
But to fly forever, follow or lead,
For the world's hope and the world's need,
Flower of all seas and all skies!

And better you were a riddled rag,
My Star-Flag, my Sky-Flag,
The faded ghost of a fighting-flag,
Shredded, and scorched with flame,

Than that you should now be satisfied
Over splendid cities and waters wide
To flutter and float in an idle pride,
To flaunt in a silken shame!

Then well may you leap in the wind so wild,
O Star-Flag, O Sky-Flag!

And well may you ripple as if you smiled,
Flag of our hearts' delight!

We joy because you are aligned
With these the noblest of your kind:
We are yours and theirs with a single
mind—

Let us on to the beckoning fight!

EARTH-BROWN ARMIES

EARTH-BROWN armies, on the brown earth
whither,

Ant-like swarming, rush ye in your wrath?
—We wrestle and we tug and we pull all
together

To shift the giant Dead Thing that lies
across the path.

Earth-brown armies, but should it roll and
smother,

Log-like topple, and crush you in the clod?
—Earth would pour new armies, one be-
hind another,

To shift the giant Dead Thing that blocks
the way of God!

THE IMPERATIVE

WHETHER we lose the light
Of love or of the sun,
With body and blood and mind and might
Must this sole thing be done:

The world is a broken ball,
Stained red because it fell
Out of bounds, in a game of kings,
Over the wall of hell:

And now must the spirit of man
Arise and adventure all—
Leap the wall sheer down into hell
And bring up the broken ball.

Worth well, to lose the light
Of love or of the sun,
Worth endless fire or endless night,
So this sole thing were done!

WAR-SACRIFICE

ON a rock-altar stern
In sacrificial fires,
A man goes up to burn
His memories and desires.

Sweet savors of the earth,
All innocence and ease,
All pleasantness and mirth,
He offers on his knees.

His trembling, star-white dreams;
His body's secret fear;
His life—how dear it seems,
How knit with lives more dear!

Last offering, and most dread—
With blind arms thrust above
His bowed and suffering head,
He burns his brother-love:

Yet from that altar springs,
Magnificently bright,
A Love with fiery wings
To fill the world with light.

THE YOUTH AND WAR

SHE said, "I will hide all the brave books
away from him,

With their scarlet letters that burn into
the heart;

I will lock their spell and their sovereign
sway from him;

I will rear him tenderly, a life apart."

But the day came and the hour came,
And the foul deed struck him like a
spur;

And he felt the shame and the swift
flame,

And his eyes were strange to her.

In the dreams of the night had the old
Captains come to him,
And the staunch old Admirals that died
long ago;
From the old fields of fight came the roll
of the drum to him,
With a call that his mother could not know;
It seemed that a Sword gleamed
blinding-bright
At the dawn-edge of the sky;
And he said, "O Mother, the Right is
the Right:
I must fight for it now though I die!"

MOTHERS OF SOLDIERS

WHAT should we say to you, O glorious
Mothers

Sacred and full of sorrows, we childless
ones?

We kneel to you as haloed women, we
others,

The slighter lives that could not give their
sons.

Not ours the exquisite anguish of surrender,
The deep, still courage that day by day
endures,

The rosary of memories piercing-tender,
The travail and the triumph that are
yours.

The agony and the glory of creation

You have partaken; in that steep way you
trod

You have made yourselves part of the
world's salvation,

You have shared the passion and the joy
of God.

With splendor of sunrise and the surging
morn,

Out of your pain shall Man be newly born.

A REPRISAL

AT the deep midnight hour
Sleep, that makes all things whole,
Indulged my tortured soul.
In the jewel-chest of dreams
He stirred the elusive gleams,
And found the gift of power,
Round, pure, and perfect power,
And laid it in my hand.

I said: "I have command
Of the Prince of the Power of the Air;
His own wings will I wear!
I will soar as a great hell-kite
To be named The Terror-by-Night,
Over mine enemy's land."

At the thought, I rode the sky,
High over the sea, and high
Over field and city and spire;
I laughed; I had my desire.
For I came to mine enemy's roof,
Safe in a valley aloof,
And I knew, as I poised above,
There lay his Hope and his Love,
The twain that he held most dear,
Nestled with cheeks together,
Roses in summer weather,
Sleeping without a fear.
Gray Memory, close beside,
Couched her old, kindly head.
It was mine to strike them dead,
Even as mine own had died.

I cried with a great voice,
To mine enemy I cried:

"Come forth, come forth, to hear!
Look up, look up, to see!
Lo, what is in my choice!
This deed of black disgrace,
This have you done to me;
This might I do to you;
Yet this I would not do,
Yea, this I could not do!
Let the knowledge smite your pride
Like a gauntlet in the face!"

Mine enemy stood in his gate:
He was sadder than I had thought.
I hated what he had wrought,
But him I could not hate.
His eyes were startled wide.
What would he have replied?
I know not. Ere he spoke,
The merciless morning broke.

Hawkers in sunny streets
Shrilled triumphs and defeats,
Sold horrors and despairs.
Bells called the world to prayers.

ON THE DEATH OF AN UNTRIED SOLDIER

*"He was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally; and for his passing
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him."—HAMLET.*

HE died in armor, died with lance in rest.
The trumpet had not sounded for the
charge;
Yet shall his guerdon of golden fame be
large,
For he was ready; he had met his test.

No sacrifice is more complete and clean
Than that in the locked soul, secret and
still.

Take for a visible deed the perfect will;
Crown with sad pride the accomplishment
unseen.

Hang his bright arms undinted on the wall.

In all brave colors whereto his dreams
aspired

Blazon his blank shield as his heart
desired,

And write above: "*The readiness is all.*"

THE AIRMAN

SPLENDOR of chivalrous Youth, swift-soar-
ing far

In valorous venture of eagle-battle on high
Fate of a falling star—

Nay! a new Star in the sky!

TO FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

(Killed in action, July 31, 1917)

BEAUTY's boy-servant, far in Flanders dead,
There shoots across the sea a shaft of
pain

To think you are gone—a memory gar-
landed

With wilding flowers plucked in an Irish
lane.

'Your songs were like sweet waters to the
throat,

Or tenderness and freshness of young
leaves;

Surely the blackbird checks his laughing note,
And for your loss the dripping rainbow
grieves.

With Brooke you are gone, with Grenfell,
on high ways

Lost to our sense, beyond the chance of
wrong;

Singers fall silent in these thunderous days,
But their bright death is radiance and a
song.

—God send kind sleep to those clear Irish
eyes

That saw the old earth still dewy with
surprise!

THE WAY OF THE WHITE SOULS

(To the Memory of JOYCE KILMER, killed in action,
July 30, 1918)

I STOOD in the summer night, when the hosts
 of heaven seemed nigh,
And I saw the powdery swirl of stars, where
 it swept across the sky,
The wide way of the white stars, where it
 ran up and down,
And my heart was sad for the man who said
 It was Main Street, Heaventown.

He chose to walk in the Main Street, in the
 wide ways of men;
He set wings to the common things with the
 kind touch of his pen;

He caught the lilt of the old tune that the
 hearts of the plain folk beat;
He might have dreamed on the far faint
 hills—but he walked in the Main Street.

He knelt down with his fellows, in the warm
 faith of the throng;
He went forth with his fellows to fight a
 monstrous Wrong;
He marched away to the true tune that the
 hearts of brave men beat,
Shoulder to brown shoulder, with the men
 in the Main Street.

A road runs bright through the night of
 Time, since ever the world began,
The wide Way of the White Souls, the Main
 Street of Man,

The sky-road of the star-souls, beyond all
wars and scars;
And there the singing soul of him goes on
with the marching stars.

So, as I stand in the summer night, when the
hosts of heaven seem nigh,
And look at the powdery swirl of stars,
where it sweeps across the sky,
The wide way of the white stars, where it
runs up and down,
My heart shall be glad for the friend who
said *It was Main Street, Heaventown.*

RESPITE

O BEAUTY, heal my heart! I lean to thee,
Faint, having supped with horrors: give
me drink!

—Red slopes beneath tall pines, ranged
tree on tree;

Long cool gray lakes, with iris round the
brink

In knightly companies purple and proud;
Birches as altar-candles slender and
white;

A late gold sun, traced curiously with cloud;
The spacious splendors of the moon-filled
night;

Among the wild-rose crowds, the perfect
one;

White sea-gulls like white lilies, on brown
bars

That slant athwart blue bays; gulls in the
sun

Rising as galaxies of trembling stars:
Lull me awhile, O Beauty, drug my dread!
—To-morrow morn War stands beside my
bed.

HAPPY COUNTRY

HERE by the bright blue creek the good
ships lie

A-building, and the hammers beat and
beat,

And the wood-smell is pleasant in the
heat;

The strong reeds curve against the marsh and
sky.

Here the old men are mowing in the sun,
And the hay-sweetness blends with the
wild-rose;

At the field's edge the scarlet lily glows;
The great clouds sail, and the swift shadows
run,

And the broad undulant meadows gloom and
smile;

Over the russet red-top warm winds pass,
The swallow swoops and swerves, the
cattle stand

In the cool of shallow brooks—and all the
while

Peace basks asleep, she dreams of some
sad land

Leagues over sea, where youth is mown as
grass.

TO FRANCE

SWEET France, we greet thee with our
cheers, our tears,

Our tardy swords! O sternly, wanly fair
In that red martyr-aureole thou dost
wear!

Even for the sake of our bright pioneers,
Chapman, and Seeger, and such dear dead
peers

Of thy dead sons, joyous and swift to dare
All fiery danger of the earth and air,
Forgive us, France, our hesitating years!

Quenchless as thine own spirit is our trust
That thou shalt spring resurgent, like the
brave

Pure plume of Bayard, from the blood and
dust

Of this grim combat-to-the-utterance,

Fresh as the foambow of the charging
wave,

O plume of Europe, proud and delicate
France!

TO BELGIUM

CROWNED WITH THORNS

THOU that a brave, brief space didst keep
the gate

Against the German, saving all the West
By the subjection of thy shielding breast
To the brute blows and utmost shames of
Fate;

Thou that in bonds of iron dost expiate
Thy nobleness as crime! Even thus
oppressed,

Is not thy spirit mystically blest,
O little Belgium, marvellously great?

Thou that hast prized the soul above the
flesh,

Dost thou not, starving, eat of angels'
bread?

With every sunrise crucified afresh,
Has not this guerdon for all time sufficed—
That thou shouldst wear upon thy hag-
gard head
The awful honor of the Crown of Christ?

THE CREED OF AN AMERICAN

IN God our Father, and in all men's
Sonship;

In Brother-love and breaking down of
barriers;

In Law that is the just will of the People
Shaped, and still shaping, to the People's
need;

In equal Freedom and in equal Service,
Duties and Rights: in all these I believe.

In these great States bound in a greater
Union,

Many in One, the framework of the Fathers,
Nobly devised, a forecast of the future

When all the Nations gather in God's fold;
The great Experiment, the high Adventure,
The captain Hope: in all this I believe.

In this bright Flag of Liberty and Union:
Its red, the symbol of the blood of brothers
That flows through men of every race and
nation;
Its white, the symbol of the peace between
them
That shall be when God's Will has wrought
as leaven;
Its stars, the symbol of many Powers that
move
Clustering together without clash or conflict,
In the deep blue of the vast, tender sky
That is the all-enfolding mantle of God—
With my whole soul in all these I believe.

That I in peace must show my true allegiance
To this bright Flag, this constellated Union,
By square-done work and clean unselfish
living;

That I in war must show my true
allegiance—

While war shall linger in this world to
threaten

Such Sanctities as these—even by my
dying:

In all this I believe. Amen. Amen.

THE ULTIMATE VICTORY

As men that labor in a mountain war—

Scaling sheer cliffs, hewing out stairs of
stone,

Trenching the ice, quenching the torrent's
roar

With rolling thunders in the gorges lone—
Having seized a height, might stand with
dazzled stare,

Seeing, beyond, a highest heavenly peak
Hung lucent as a cloud in the bright air,
Still to be won: O thus, even thus, we
seek

Peace beyond War! and thus the Vision
gleams

Upon us battling, that snow-crest sublime,

That holy mountain, that pure crown of
dreams,

Toward which Man's soul has struggled
up through Time.

In blood and sweat we war that War may
cease;

And storming the last peak, we conquer
Peace.

ROOSEVELT, 1919

How shall we say "God rest him!"
Of him who loved not rest,
But the pathless plunge in the forest
And the pauseless quest,
And the call of the billowing mountains,
Crest beyond crest?

Hope rather, God will give him
His spirit's need—
Rapture of ceaseless motion
That is rest indeed,
As the cataract sleeps on the cliff-side
White with speed.

So shall his soul go ranging
Forever, swift and wide,
With a strong man's rejoicing,
As he loved to ride;
But all our days are poorer
For the part of him that died.

THE QUIET DAYS

OLD BURYING HILL

THIS is a place that has forgotten tears.

The scythe and hour-glass and the skull
and bones

Have lost their menace on the marred
gray stones.

The long grass flows, still as the stream of
years.

The goldenrod leans low her dreaming head.

Under the loving sun and the warm sky

These lichen'd letters tell an outworn lie,
A slander of good Death, discredited.

A drowsy cricket harps; and do but see!

With mystic orbs upon his dusky wing,

Here goes about his airy harvesting

Our little Brother Immortality.

Lost is their title, those gaunt Fears of yore:

Beauty has made this crown-land evermore.

HEARTBREAK ROAD

As I went up by Heartbreak Road
Before the dawn of day,
The cold mist was all about,
And the wet world was gray;
It seemed that never another soul
Had walked that weary way.

But when I came to Heartbreak Hill,
Silver touched the sea;
I knew that many and many a soul
Was climbing close to me;
I knew I walked that weary way
In a great company.

ROMANCE

"Good cheap! Good cheap! Buy my golden
ware!

Sunny-afternoon-color, happy-harvest-moon-
color,

Burnished bright as Beauty's golden hair!

O come buy!

Buy my rare golden ware!"

(But they never came anigh him, they went
trooping by him,

To trade at the shop of Despair—

At the dark little shop of Despair!)

"Good cheap! Good cheap! Buy my magic
ware!

[All your meat shall savor of it, all your
drink take flavor of it,

Yea, 'twill warm ye when the hearth is bare!

O come buy!

Buy my fair golden ware!"

(But they hurried past the turning, with
their fixed eyes burning,

Making haste to be cheated by Despair—

Buying dear at the counter of Despair!)

FAITH

BEFORE the rose and violet had begun
On sky and sea, while all the world was
still,
Colorless, lifeless, unconsoled, and chill,
One little bird sang out about the Sun.

INTIMATIONS

"Who has seen the Wind?"—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

I HAVE seen the Wind,
I have seen him plain—
The silver feet of the Wind
Racing on the rain.

I have seen Time pass:
Viewless as he sped,
The red sand in the glass
Was shaken by his tread.

Far, far the goal,
And hearts must part awhile—
But I have seen the Soul
Shining through a smile.

Dim, dim the plan,
And dumb is the clod:
But in the eyes of Man
I have seen—God.

ON THE SINGING
OF "GAUDEAMUS IGITUR"

HARK, how Youth, a scholar gowned,
With the cap of Wisdom crowned,
Carols like the reckless lark,
Forgetful of the dark!

What is toil, oh, what are tears?
Time turns pale when thus he hears
Angelic insolence of sound
Scorning the beaten ground.

In the face of Fate is flung
This gage-gauntlet of the young—
Innocent brave challenge, hurled
In the teeth of the world!

Graybeard Years file solemn past;
Yet this rebel glee shall last
Long as souls at morning rise,
New larks, to the old skies.

THE COUNTERSIGN

ON guard my heavy Heart did stand,
And sleep had conquered her,
Had not one cold and rigid hand
Gripped honor like a spur.

It was the starkest watch of all,
The hour before the end.
Out rang the startled challenge-call:
"Halt! Who goes there?" "A Friend."

"The countersign?" my spent Heart cried,
And forward-peering stood.
A Voice as strange as sweet replied:
"The word is BROTHERHOOD."

FAILURE TRIUMPHANT

How many a captain wave, since sea began,
Has lordly led the charge against the
shore,

Whose crest a jewelled plume of rainbow
bore,

As iris Hope arches the march of Man:

How many a wave, brave-glittering in the
van,

Has melted as a cloud in spray and roar—

A flashing column prone, and next, no
more!

So runs the tale, since Time's first sand
outran.

So ends the antique tale. Stay! ends it so?
Though every billow faint into a ghost,
The all-embracing ocean—that gives
birth,
Receives, and recreates—in ebb and flow,
A vast sky-coupled Mystery round the
coast,
Works out its will upon the face of
earth.

THE SPARK

*Readers of riddles dark,
Solve me the mystery of the Spark!*

My good dog died yesternight.
His heart of love through his eyes of light
Had looked out kind his whole life long.
In all his days he had done no wrong.
Like a knight's was his noble face.
What shall I name the inward grace
That leashed and barred him from all things
base?

Selfless trust and courage high—
Dust to dust, but are these to die?

[(Hate and lust and greed and lies—
Dust to dust, and are these to rise?)]

*When 'tis kindled, whither it goes,
Whether it fades, or glows and grows—
Readers of riddles dark,
Solve me the mystery of the Spark!*

FOXGLOVES

PINK-PURPLE foxgloves

Leaning to the breeze—

And all the sweet of Devon

Sweeps back across the seas:

The deep coombs of Devon

Where the tiny hamlets nest,

The golden sea of Devon

That glimmers toward the west:

The thatched roofs of Devon

To which the soft skies bend—

Now the dear God keep Devon

The same to His world's end!

THE CHRISTMAS BAGPIPES

I HEARD on Christmas Eve the bonny bag-
pipes play;
The thin silver skirling, it sounded far away;
The yellow mellow light shone through my
neighbor's panes,
And on the starry night came the shrill dear
strains.

Despite the welter of the wide cold sea,
They brought bonny Scotland across the
world to me;
And my heart knew the heather that my
sense had never smelt,
And my spirit drank the hill wind my brows
had never felt.

From the old kind books came the old
friends trooping,
And the old songs called, like the curlew
swooping;
And like a sudden sup that was hot and
strong and sweet,
The love of bonny Scotland, it ran from
head to feet.

O blessings on the heather hills, in white
mist or sun!
O blessings on the kind books that make
the clans as one!
And blessings on the bagpipes whose magic
spanned the sea,
And brought bonny Scotland across the
world to me!

WHEN THE ROSES GO DOWN TO THE SEA

ON Gloucester moors the roses
 Bloom haunted of the bee;
But there comes an hour of the summer
 With the ebb-tide running free,
In a blue day of the summer,
 When the roses go down to the sea.

The hands of the little children
 Carry them to the shore;
The folk of the City of Fishers
 Come out from every door;
They remember the lost captains
 That shall come to the port no more.

They remember the lost seamen
Whose names the chaplain reads;
Old English names of Gloucester
Are told like slipping beads,
And the names of the fearless Irish lads,
And Portuguese and Swedes.

They remember the lost fishers
Who shall come no more to the land,
Nor look on the broad blue harbor,
Nor see the Virgin stand,
Our Lady of Good Voyage,
With the sailing-ship in her hand.

They pray to the Friend of fishers
On the Sea of Galilee
For the souls and bodies of seamen
Wherever their voyages be;

And singing they send the roses

On the ebb-tide down to the sea.

And the lost seamen and captains,

Wherever their bodies be,

If ever the sight of a mortal rite

Can move a soul set free,

Are glad of the kindness of Gloucester,

Their old sea-city of Gloucester,

Are moved with the memory of Gloucester,

When the roses go down to the sea.

RITUAL FOR SUMMER DEAD

AUGUST turns autumnal now:
Scarlet the sudden maple-bough
At the turn of the wood-road gleams;
On the hearth the gray log sings
Sleepy songs of vanished things—
Babbling, bubbling John-a-Dreams.
August is autumn now.

Find the field where, dead and dry,
Under the broad still noontide sky,
Bleached in the flow of the bright-blue
weather,
Stalks of the milkweed stand together.
Take the pale-brown pod in hand,

Packed with seeds of silvery feather;
Wander dreaming through the land.
Let each silken plumelet sift
Through the fingers, drift and drift,
Touched with the sun to rainbow light—
Float—and float—and out of sight!

So might incense drift away.
Golden Summer is dead to-day.
As a pious thurifer
Swing the censer meet for her.

RED OCTOBER

RED October, and the slow leaf sailing;
All the maples flaring scarlet splendor,
All the dogwoods glowing crimson glory,
All the oak-leaves bronze, the beech-leaves
golden:

Blue, ah blue! the reaches of the river,
Blue the sky above the russet mountain,
Blue the creek among the tawny marshes,
Blue the tart wild-grape beside the hill-
road:

At our feet the burnished chestnut shining;
Scent of autumn, and the brown leaves'
rustle;

Cloudy clematis among the brambles,
Orange bittersweet along the wayside.

Days too-perfect, priceless for their passing,
Colored with the light of evanescence,
Fragrant with the breath of frailest beauty—
Days ineffable of red October!

THE SINGER CHOOSES THE SONGS OF THE WIND

HENCEFORTH I will sing no songs
But the songs that are fluent, irregular,
 swift, unguided:
I will turn no tunes but the tunes of the winds
 and the waters.
I know that the song of the bird is remem-
 bered, it changes not;
And I know that the song of the wind is
 unremembered;
But it stirs the ground of the heart while
 the song is a-singing,
And it flows from a vaster source than the
 song of the bird.

So I will sing the song of the wind in the
 long grass, by the river,
And the song of the wind in the dry and
 copper-brown oak-leaves,
In the autumnal season, so beautiful and sad,
And the song of the wind in the green cool
 ranks of the corn
As it stirs very lightly in the summer,
And the song of the wind in the pines, when
 the shadows are blue on the snow,
And the song, song, song, of the wind in the
 flapping flag,
And the winter-night song of the wind in the
 chimney,
And the swelling, lulling song of the swirling
 wind of the sea
That is blent with the plunge of the sea.

THE GLEAM TRAVELS

IT is morning, and April.

(They sleep, but I am alive and awake—
the soft warm lucent blue of the spring
heaven bathes my soul.)

There, and again there, the willow-veils
hanging, golden-green, tremulous,

Near by, the bright red-bronze of the lifted
cherry-boughs, flashing in the sun,

Far off, gray-purple of the woods warming
to life;

The clouds floating—O so full of light and
blessing, that I think they live and love,

Or truly that they are beautiful veils, not
all hiding that which lives and loves!

Morning, and April,

And on the far-away road, hither leading,
the road but now gray with the cloud-
shadow,

The gleam travels.

Hitherward the gleam travels;

Behind it lies the gray shadow on the hill.

O life immense! O love unspeakable! O
large To-day!

O moment of utterance given to me (the
shadow too travels),

O moment of joy, of trust, of song for my
soul, and for those who sleep, and for
those who shall by and by wake!

Life,

Morning, and April—

Hitherward the gleam travels!

THE GRAY VICTORY

ON the top of a great rock,
A rounded boulder with rust-colored stains,
Set high over the blue-green of the bay,
Braced strong with iron against the strong
 salt wind,
The old, gray figurehead is left.

Does any one know who set it there, so high?
Some sailor-fisherman
Who lived in a little hut beside the rock.
The hut is gone, there are the bricks of its
 foundation,
The old, gray figurehead is left.

A carving crude yet noble,
Of silvery, weathered wood:
A hero-woman,
Large, simple, bold and calm.
One hand is on her breast, her throat curves
proudly,
Her head is thrown back proudly, she
seems exulting;
There is also in her look something
strangely devout,
Patient, and nobly meek.

What far-away workman made her, and
what was his meaning?
Was she a Victory? or Hope, or Faith?

She looks upon the sea:
The bitter sea that cast upon these rocks
Her ship of long ago.

Who knows what agony, who knows what
loss

Is in her memory? What struggle of sailors
In wild cold waves, at night?

With head thrown back

She looks upon the sea.

In every large curve of her broken body

Is trust, is triumph.

Against the sky she rises,

The light-filled, pure, ineffable azure sky;

Serene, unshaken,

Rises the Victory.

FLAGS AND THE SKY

I LOOKED from my window:

I heard a whisper without from the rippling
poplar,

I heard the wash of the river, its waves are
never still;

I looked, and over the water the flag,

Alive as the river, alive as the rippling
poplar,

Rippled too in the wind.

The sun was upon it.

It had the beauty of flowers.

O flag, though you were not my own, I
know I should love you:

I love all flowers, all flags:

Their colors in the wind flowing, in the sun
brightening:

Deep blue of the night sky, or the splendor
of flame,

Or green of spring, or the daring imperious
scarlet,

The color of men's blood:

Their curious blazonry I love, heraldic, his-
toric,

Leopard or eagle, stripe or star or raying
sun,

Or the Cross of St. George and the Cross
of St. Andrew,

Or whatsoever sign men have loved and
followed.

For surely a flag has a soul.

It is a thing sacred as sunrise,

It is sacred as the stars.

The spirit of Man lifts it up into the sky
That holds all stars, all flags.

I believe that a flag cannot be dishonored
forever

By any deed of men.

Let it but fly awhile, and the wind will win-
now it,

And the fierce pure sun will purge it, will
wash it clean;

For the souls of races and nations live in the
sky,

And are forever better than the deeds
men do.

There was a man who burned with fire
The flag that he loved best,
Because he thought that out of its dead ashes
Might rise the Flag of Man.

He would have to wait a long time for that
 rising,
 He would have to wait forever;
 For live things do not rise out of ashes,
 They rise out of live loves.

That man never knew that his flag had a
 soul,
 He never knew that the world needed the
 soul in his flag,
 And the souls in all flags.

The Flag of Man!
 What should be its colors, in the wind flow-
 ing, in the sun brightening?
 And what should be its curious blazonry?

The upper field should be blue as the sky
 of God:

The lower field should be red as the blood
of Man:

And there should fly forever beside it—
Always beside it, and neither above nor
below it—

The one flag that a man is born to,
Born of his mother to love and not to leave,
As he loves his mother and will not leave her.

The Flag of Man!

It is long a-weaving.

God speed the weaving, and Man speed the
weaving!

Let every one of us go on weaving that
flag in his heart;

Perhaps, when the grass is rippling over the
grave of him,

It may ripple in the sky that holds all stars,
all flags,

The Flag of All Souls.

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